584 square ; they sit down in the shade. They are asked : " What do you want ? " " We have come to see the girls ", they answer bluntly. And the reply is : " All right. Look at them. "

584 Of course the girls do their very best to be as pleasing as
292 possible, as the mother has told them that these are suitors.
361 The suitor is easily known by his special attire, a belt of skins either of leopard or tiger-cat. He goes from one yard to the other, and talks with the cooks, inquiring their names, and looking at them as, with vigourous and graceful movements of the body, they crush the mealies in their mortar. If the seekers find what they want, they return home, if not, they go to the next hamlet. (Let us say here that each village consists of not more than six to twelve huts built in a circle, leaving a central circular place, the shaded " square ", of which the oxen kraal occupies the middle.) (See Part II.)

584 When he is satisfied, the suitor goes home and says to his parents : "So and so pleases me. Go and woo her. (Ku buta)." Then a middle aged man of the village is sent to the parents of the young girl. He is received in the father's hut and, with all the circumlocutions required by etiquette, he discharges his errand. The girl is called and told that the visitor who came the other day has chosen her ; she is asked if she also loves him (or if she wants him... for there is only one word in Ronga to express these two kindred notions, ku randja). " Oh! is it the one who looked thus and so and who wore this and that ? Yes, I consent to accept (to eat) the money out of his hands (ku da *bukosi ku yena*). " If she does not care for him, she will declare it quite as plainly : the suitor will have to seek elsewhere. It is a fact worth noting that, amongst these so-called savages, a father very seldom obliges his daughter to accept a husband whom she dislikes, except in the case of debt. If the matter is arranged to the satisfaction of all parties the buta (1) or betrothal is concluded and the messenger is feasted, while he, on his part, gives a present (shihlengwe) to the girl's parents of the value of a hoe or ten

(1) *Buta* may be a factitive derivative of the verb *huta*, to speak : to cause somebody to speak, to give an answer.

E. MATURE AGE

1. *The Bantu Ideal.*

581 354 562 885 The married man is called " he who has his home " (a ni le kwakwe) in opposition to the single man (nkhwenda). But let us say at once that the kind of individual called bachelor does not abound amongst the Bantus. Only the utterly wretched, invalids, and the weak-minded, are deprived of legal marriage, which for the black man is and remains the one object in life. It is through his wife and children that he becomes somebody in society. This fact does not appear during the first year of wedlock, for the newly married woman must cook at the fireplace of her mother-in-law. She is hardly more than a servant during a whole year ; she does not possess her own pot ; and this must be so because she does not yet eat the mealies of her own garden, having ploughed her fields in her former domicile the previous year. Her husband eats with her. He is not yet 595 a lord. But if he is rich, if he is the heir of an important man, he will not be long in buying a second and third wife.

These new marriages will be contracted like the first, but with less pomp. It may even happen that the feast is held in the husband's village, if he is middle-aged and is celebrating his fifth or sixth wedding.

595 342 556 542 361 For each new wife, he will build a hut. He has begun his village when building the house of his first wife, the great wife, (nsati lwe nkulu) as she is called, who will remain the principal one whatever may happen. While, without compass, he was drawing on the ground, with the marvellous instinct of the South African Native, the circumference of the circle on which the patched reed walls of his dwelling were to rise, while he was covering this circular wall with a conical roof, he was saying to himself : " I establish my home ; I inaugurate my village ". During the following years, the aim of his life will be to complete little by little another wider circle... When he has bought his

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

when he has brought his

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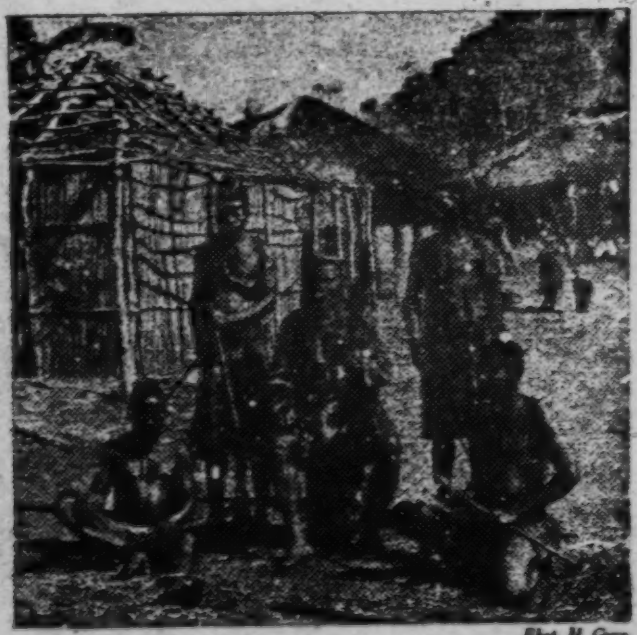
second wife, he will build for her also a hut of the same type. But this second hut, the third, and the fourth which may come afterwards, will not be erected in a straight row like a street. They will form an arc, which will be prolonged so as to constitute first a semi-circle and then a complete circle, if a sufficient number of buildings are added. This is the ideal of the black man, to



Phot. H. Gros

Ndjahmdjala, a headman of Spelonken, with his sons.

become the lord and master of a complete circular village. Most of the men do not realise this ideal. Three or four huts, a wretched quarter of a circle is all that they attain to! Some, better armed for the struggle of life, or more favoured by circumstances, succeed in closing their circle. Their cattle, for which they have also built a circular enclosure right in the middle of the square of the village, multiply and are not carried off by peripneumonia and hematuria,

595 which, in this country, decimate so many herds! Every three
592 years, theirs wives bear children. If they are boys, it is an
361 honour; the village will not lack heirs, neither will the father
556 lack arms to help and to defend him! If they are girls, it means
842 wealth; oxen will come to the family! Their brothers will not lack wives, for the sisters will be sold to provide for the brothers. Meanwhile, the huts are erected, large and small, that of the head of the family being the largest, the *malao*, those of the boys the least well kept.

Let us consider a Ronga favoured by fate, as was Gidja, of the country of Libombo, near Rikatla. His village numbered not less than twenty-four huts, with beautiful shady trees behind; notice the enclosure for the cattle and for the goats on the central place, that for the pigs behind the houses... There are cocks and hens pecking about everywhere, dogs wandering around in search of something to steal, for they receive hardly any food; a crowd of youngsters leading the cattle, and everywhere the noise of the pestles crushing the daily mealies in the large mortars. He walks about proudly in his favoured enclosure, contemplating his prosperity with pleasure. Young men are ready to do the work he gives them to do. He will treat them with beer brewed by his wives. And often the people of the neighbouring villages will join his people for dances and games on the fine square, which is surrounded and enclosed on all sides by huts.

595 And, above all things, in the evening, each of his wives will
556 bring him the pot which she has cooked for him. This is the
574 essential matrimonial duty of the wife. Not one will fail in it. Gidja, the lord of six or seven pots of mealies seasoned with a sauce of monkey nuts, will feast and be satiated (shura) every day, and that means much, for the inner capacity of a Thonga is something wonderful.

He will become large and stout, and shining, which in South Africa is a sure sign of wealth and nobility. The stouter he gets the more will he be respected. But it can easily be imagined that he cannot alone empty all these pots over which he reigns supreme. He feasts his children, but others too come to pay him visits at the evening hour when they know him to be surround-

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF THE VILLAGE.

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396 The Thonga village (muti) is not a hap-hazard agglomeration of people. It is a social organism with a well-defined construction and is regulated by strict laws. After all, it is merely an enlarged family: the headman and the old people who have fallen to his charge, his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, his married sons, his unmarried sons and daughters. All these people form a community whose life it is most interesting to study.

Let us describe its outward appearance, the laws of its "foundation" and "moving", its organisation under the headman, the doings of its different members and the rules of etiquette which are observed. While our first chapter gave us an insight into the internal constitution of the Thonga family, this will show us how the social organism, which is at the base of all the tribal life, manifests itself outwardly in the village.

A. THE THONGA VILLAGE.

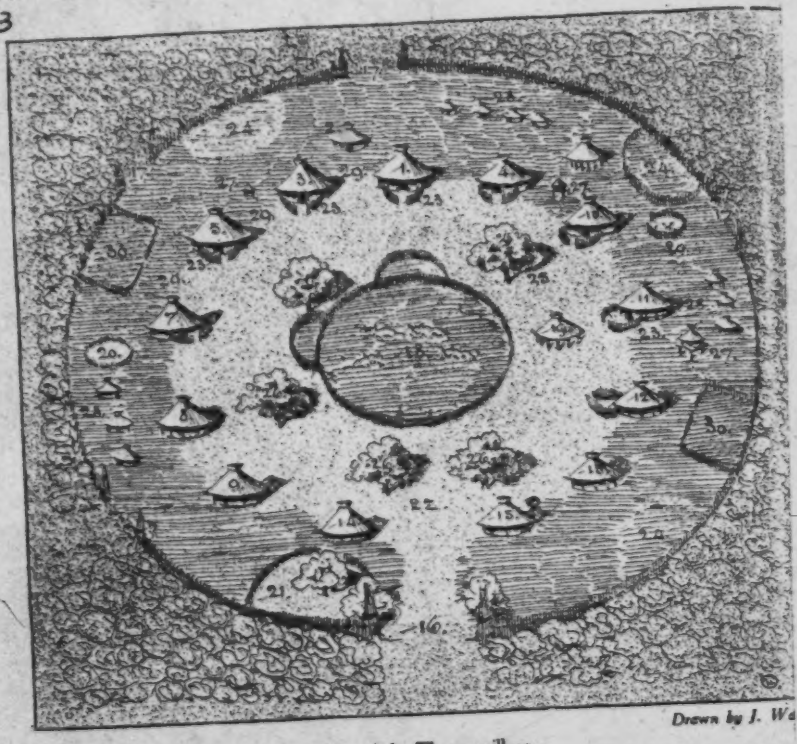
361 We have already caught a glimpse of it, from the inside, through the eyes of the headman Gidja (p. 128). Now we enter it from outside, as foreigners, with the curiosity of the ethnographer and the philosophical interests of the sociologist.

The Thonga villages present a remarquable uniformity all through the tribe. The same laws regulate their construction in the Ronga as in the Northern clans. Let us suppose that we have left Lourenço Marques and reached the Mabota and Nondwane

361 district, fifteen miles to the north, far enough from the town, where the ugly galvanised iron sheds have not yet supplanted the old typical hut. We see, in the bush, on the slope of the sandy dune, a little forest of mimosa, *minkanye*, *mikawakwa* (Strychnos). In its midst nestles a village. Thongas like to build amongst trees, to protect themselves against the terrible south winds which frequently blow across the plain, and perhaps also to shield themselves from the inquisitive eyes of people passing along the road. The little community prefers to live by
361 itself, as it is entirely self-sufficing. This small wood is also used
514 for other purposes. Thongas have not yet learned to build the kind of outhouse which is described in English by two letters (W. C.), and they "go outside" (humela handle) into the little copse. The air is not very pure when we cross it, so we hasten to reach the village. The accompanying plan (p. 312) represents a combination of features observed in many Thonga kraals; it is rare to find a "muti" as complete as this.

361 We first note the external circular fence *(lihlampfu)*. It is
712 made of branches, thorny or otherwise, one and a half to two feet
417 high, more or less rotten. It is not built as a protection against
351 enemies. In this tribe, villages are not fortified, and, in case of war, the only resource is flight. The fence protects against
361 spiritual enemies, witches, as we shall see later on. The path
351 leads us straight to the main entrance (16) the *mharana*, which is three or four feet wide. But the fence is open in some other places for narrower passages called *psiruba* (17), one for about every three huts; these smaller openings lead to the wood and are used only by the inhabitants to "humela handle." Passers by, as a rule, do not enter by such back gates. They are private. On either side of the large gate is often seen a growing tree and some poles, which clearly show the entrance. This is never closed during the day. On our right, a little court with some broken pots which denote a fire-place, is the *bandla* (21), the place where the men congregate. In front of us, at the other extremity of the circle, is the headman's hut (1) or rather the hut of his principal wife. On the way to it, we cross the *hubo* (22) the central square and pass round the *ranga*, (Ro.), *shibaya*.

or *shibala* (Dj.) (18), the oxen kraal, when the village possesses oxen. They are rare now, plague and Texas-fever having more than decimated the herds. Small enclosures at the sides



Drawn by J. W

Plan of the Thonga village.

1. Hut of the headman's first wife. 2. Headman's private hut. 3. Hut of the headman's second wife. 4. Of the third; 5. Of the fourth. 7 and 8. Huts of the two wives of the headman's youngest brother. 9. Wife of third brother. 10. Wife of fourth brother. 11. Headman's son. 12. Headman's nephew. 13. Hut of a stranger. 14. Lair of the boys. 15. Nkanga of the girls. 16. Main entrance. 17. Back gates. 18. Oxen kraal. 19. Goats' kraal. 20. Pigs' kraal. 21. Square of the men (bandla). 22. Square of the village (kubo). 23. Fire-places. 24. Ash-heaps. 25. Tree of the village. 26. Shade-trees of the kubo. 27. Headmen. 28. Strangers. 29. Place of jealousy. 30. Tobacco-gardens.

are reserved for the calves, which are kept there when the cows go to feed during the afternoon. On the right a small hut, a conical roof supported by poles without a wall so as to let the

361 air circulate, is the goats' kraal (19). It may be placed somewhere
231 else, behind the huts, for instance ; or sometimes goats are tethered
351 every night by the leg to sticks round the hubo. The pigs are
343 never kept on the hubo, but always behind the hut : they are newcomers in the Thonga village and have hardly yet won their "droit de cité." Let us salute, as we pass by, the tree (25) which
361 is, as we shall see, the mystical stem of the village. We may perhaps
824 see, hanging upon it, a piece of clothing offered to the gods, or at its
782 base a broken pot which is the *gandjelo*, the altar of the village.
351 The gandjelo is often placed, by preference, among the poles of the main entrance on the right. The village tree, which has a ritual significance, is not to be confounded with the trees of the hubo (26), which are but *mindjuti*, shade-trees, under which the inhabitants are fond of sitting.

361 So we reach the main hut which faces the gate. This is the
595 dwelling of the headman. In hut 3 lives his second wife, in 4, his third and in 5 his fourth. 2 is called *shilubelo*. Great personages, men owning a large kraal, like to build such a hut, which is smaller than the ordinary ones and where no woman sleeps. It is the headman's own hut, where people *luba*, viz., pay their homage to him; a kind of office of the master of the village! He may sleep in it and summon his wives to come to him there. But he generally prefers to sleep in his wives' huts, one month in each, according to the polygamic custom.

361 Behind 4 and 10 is a *mhala*, a shed for the implements. It is
343 built, like the goats' kraal, without plaster walls, and is smaller
351 than a hut. There may be three or four of these in the village.
596 The headman and his wives occupy the back of the village. At the sides live his younger brothers, one, who has two wives, in 7 and 8, two others, those who have but one wife each, in 9 and in 10 respectively. In 11 lives a married son; in 12 it may be a nephew, son of the headman's sister, or a son-in-law; (see page 252). 13 might be the hut of a stranger (mulubeti), who has
361 asked permission to stay with the headman of the village, as he
574 wished to be under his protection. The case is not frequent, but
783 may occur, and in order to be received into the mystic unity of the community, this man will have to "hlamba ndjaka" (See page 153), together with all the inhabitants of the kraal.

361 together with all the inhabitants of the kraal. The two huts near
313 the entrance are, on the left, the *lao*, where unmarried boys sleep
596 (14) and on the right (15) the *nhangu* where the girls live. Often
356 the nhangu is built behind the huts of the mothers, near the mhala ; in this way the girls are kept under more effective watch. The boys of the *lao* have to guard the door, which they close at night where it is the custom to do so. The *hubo* and the *bandla*, the squares, are generally kept quite clean.

361 In front of each hut is a *yard* (*ndangu* pl. *mindangu*, 23) which
372 is also generally well swept. In the centre of each of these are
417 some broken pots (mapseko), or pieces of hard clay taken from
351 ant-hills (psirubu) ; this is the *fireplace (shitiko)*, where the mistress of the hut cooks her food. The fence round the yard used, as a rule, to be made of poles or even trunks of trees planted near each other and forming a circular wall. Nowadays, especially amongst the Rongas, these yards are enclosed with reeds and may be built square, a single wall fencing off as many as three or four huts. The top of this wall is sometimes crenelated. I rather think this arrangement is modern ; the circular wall of the ndangu
585 is an old custom, as is proved by the following fact. On the day of
538 *hloma*, when the bride's-maids and female relatives bring the bride to her husband, they not only build up the woodpile (shigiyane, see page 112), but, in the northern clans, they must also erect a new ndangu which will be called *tsandana*, and so people will know that in the yard there is a *nhlomi*, a bride, working for her mother-in-law! The ndangu is the place where women tell folk-tales of the tribe to the children and to each other, whilst they attend to their cooking, or after the evening meal.

361 If cleanliness prevails on the square and in the yards, the
356 same cannot be said of the region between the huts and the
235 fence. This is called *mahosi* or *makotini*. It is the place where
351 old baskets and broken pots are kept. The chicken houses
343 (*shihahlu*, 27) are built there ; these are generally little huts, with reed walls, placed on a floor of palmtree boards, supported by four poles forked at their upper extremities. The *ash-heaps* are somewhat further on (24). They are called *tala*, and play a part in certain rites, representing, as it would seem, the place of desolation and of sorrow.

of desolation and of sorrow. (Remember Job and compare the rite of rangela bowumba, page 194.) The *store houses, psitlanda* (Ro.), *psitlati* (Dj.), 28) are close by and are built in various forms; little huts with reed walls, when intended for the mealies, with plastered walls, when built to contain ground nuts or sorgho (*madulu* (Dj.). They are sometimes placed on a palm-tree floor resting on short poles, or they are suspended to the boughs of a

Phot. A. Burd.

The interior of a Ronga village. (Nondwane).

tree. *Pigs' kraals* (*hoko* 20) are to be found in the same region; sometimes they are placed even further in the forest on account of their offensive smell.

Mealie leaves, heaps of makanye stones, broken mortars and discarded pestles lie about behind the huts. If anyone wants to keep the place tidy, he can plant pine apples there (30), or tobacco, or Chili-pepper (biribiri). Pumpkin plants often creep over all this disorder. Flowers of European origin are sometimes seen on the hubo in the neighbourhood of Lourenco Marques, especially "everlastings", or the tropical periwinkle, Vinca rosea

(L.), with its white or pink blossoms, which have spread all over the coast.

Having now finished our first general inspection, let us add some details about the huts and the open places in the village.

The hut, the construction of which we shall describe later on, (Part IV) has an opening (nyangwa) of variable dimensions closed by a door. In some parts of the Gaza country it is so small that one must positively crawl to enter it. Everywhere one must at any rate stoop low (korama). As regards the *threshhold* (ntjandja wa shipfalo), it is not taboo to step over it. The headman's threshhold however is dreaded because it was treated with medicines when the hut was built, so it is taboo to sit on it ; these powerful medicines might do harm and even cause death. In the middle of the black clay floor is a kind of raised circle, in the centre of which fire is occasionally lighted in winter on account of the cold. It is the interior *shitiko*. Cooking may be done here if it rains ; glowing embers sometimes remain on it during the night and numberless babies have been burnt to death by falling into the fire while their mothers were sleeping. On the left, on entering, is the sleeping place (shilawo) of the wife, on the right that of the husband. They both however generally spread their mats on the right and sleep beside each other. It is only during the tabooed periods (menses, nursing), that the husband must keep to his own particular side (p. 188).

The back of the hut is generally occupied by the big basket (ngula) in which clothing and seeds are kept. This spot is called *mfungwe*. In the roof *(lwangu)* are fixed or suspended various articles : ears of sorghum or millet, cobs to be used as seed at the next sowing, assagais, sticks and knobkerries etc., and against the walls one frequently observes rough drawings made with white clay, or, in the vicinity of towns, chromos of Queen Victoria, Edward VII, or Don Carlos, as the case may be!

The hubo and the bandla differ from each other. *Bandla* is a Zulu word which has supplanted the Ronga term *shisiso*, viz., "the place where one finds shelter from the wind." Men light a small fire there to warm themselves. They also eat together

361 in the bandla, and it is strictly reserved for them. Women are
351 allowed to penetrate into it only when they bring food. Boys
562 must remove the ashes from the fireplace, not women. The *hubo*, on the contrary, is open to all. A shed is sometimes built on it to afford shelter during the rainy days. There are special acts always performed on the hubo : the cutting up (shindla), the slaughtering and butchery of animals and the feast of "eating the head." The head of any slaughtered ox belongs to the men, and they eat it together on the hubo (See letter C.). It is the business of the young men to keep the hubo clean, and they sometimes assemble to pull up the grass which may have grown on it. In former times it was taboo to come to the hubo with
292 sandals. Sandals are used for hunting and must be taken off before entering the village.

Another place to which I have already alluded is the *bukwele*,
361 the "place of jealousy," where angry co-wives insult each other!
351 On our diagram it would be located between 5 and 4, for the
595 wives of the headman.

The Thonga village, this closed circle of huts, is a living
361 organism. All its members form a whole whose unity is remark-
596 able. This common life never appears in a more striking form
264 than at the evening meal. Let us look at our diagram. In every
476 yard the mistress of the hut has cooked her mealies and her sauce in different pots, and, when the sun sets, she distributes the contents (phamela) in wooden or earthen plates. The largest is for the husband. He sits on the bandla with his companions, the other men of the village, and the youths waiting for the meal. All these plates, generally carried by small girls or boys, are brought from all sides to the men's gathering. All do not necessarily contain the ordinary mealies pap ; some are filled with manioc, some with sweet potatoes, etc. The men attack the first plate, all of them taking the food with their fingers. They pass on to the second and so on to the last. Meanwhile each mother has filled other smaller plates, one for the girls, one for the boys, one for herself. She has even sent to each of the other women of the village a little of her cooking, and the others have done the same to her ; so each member of the community, when

361 he or she has finished the meal, will have eaten a little of all
546 that has been cooked on all the fires. It is impossible to
264 imagine a more perfect communism than this as regards food!
476 I myself witnessed this custom of the evening meal in Spoon Libombo's village in Rikatla. Amongst the inhabitants of the kraal there were two blind male adults, the wife of one of them being half blind herself ; the wife of the other was an old woman who could hardly till a few square yards of mealies and ground-nuts, and keep the birds and the hens away from them. Spoon's wife and the wife of another man of the village alone were healthy and able to work normally. So the whole burden rested on their shoulders, as the share the other women could take in the feeding of the men was necessarily small. However I never heard Spoon grumble ; being the headman, he made it a point of honour that all the people dwelling with him should have enough to eat. Everybody who has lived with South African Natives has admired their wonderful readiness to share any food they may have with those present. Even children are much superior in this respect to White children. I attribute this virtue to the community of food which reigns in the Bantu village, and which is certainly one of the most attractive features of Kafir socialism. Village life has not taught the Thongas merely bad habits.

B. MOVING A VILLAGE AND FOUNDING A NEW ONE.

621 Large kraals similar to the one shown in our illustration
754 were more numerous in former times than now. It is rare to
596 meet with such a number of huts and so many people under one headman. Why ? Because, say my informants, the superstition of witchcraft has considerably increased in later times. Suppose the wife of one of the younger brothers should
[787] die ; the divinatory bones reveal that this death is due to a witch ; they go so far as to designate one of the wives of the headman as guilty. No common life is any longer possible. The widower will move elsewhere and build a fence around his

l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

000 seemed to be struck by the argument and accepted it readily, but the idea did not occur to them of itself.

This difficulty in grasping the immoral character of polygamy explains why such a great number of Christian Natives, even after having been monogamists for a time, so easily fall back into polygamy. I heard that in the Cameroons, when, owing to the war, the German missionaries had to leave the country, polygamy invaded the Native congregations wholesale, Native ministers themselves returning to it, and the French missionaries who came to the rescue of these Churches had a terrible battle to fight in order to restore monogamy. All this shows that a long education will be necessary before the Bantu mind is sufficiently transformed to be able to understand perfectly and then to accept freely and willingly the standards of Christian morality in this domain.

V. ON THE FATE OF THE THONGA VILLAGE (See p. 355).

177 361 363 What will be the fate of the little Bantu community, of the circular kraal of huts, well shut in behind its fence, under the shade of its symbolical tree, well "tied" under the absolute authority of the headman ? If we look at the new Native settlements, at the modern Native villages, built under the influence of civilisation and Christianity, we shall be struck at once by the fact that they are arranged in regular streets (1). This change is momentous and highly significative. The new Thonga village is no longer a well defined family. It has become an agglomeration of families belonging to different clans, attracted to a particular spot by the European town or by the Church and the school. The straight line, with its capacity of infinite prolongation, has taken the place of the circular, with its necessarily restricted length. Considering that new ideas are now invading the Bantu tribe from all sides, it is certain that the old circle will disappear more and more and that regular streets will be more generally adopted.

From the point of view of the picturesque, this is a great pity. For the ethnographer, the circle of huts, that curious Bantu commune with its striking laws, was ten times more interesting than the commonplace street

(1) In many Bantu tribes, those of Central Africa, even in the Ba-Chopi tribe, on the South-Eastern boundary of the Thonga country, the Natives already have straight streets. Is this plan original or not ? I suppose nobody can say. In the Thonga, Zulu and Suiho kraals, at any rate, the circular arrangement is a characteristic feature.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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of square houses or galvanised iron sheds, which are a poor imitation of European dwellings. However, from the practical point of view, this change is unavoidable. It even undoubtedly stands for progress.

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The *Native hut* is prettily shaped. I prefer the Thonga form, a circular wall on which a conical roof is placed, to the Zulu, a beehive resting on the ground, or even to the Kaffir, which combines the features of both, having also a circular wall but with a cupola roof. The conical

Phot. H. A. Junod.

Christian village of Shiluvane.

roof is a better protection against rain. But all these forms of dwelling have one great fault: they are not healthy. The rays of the sun cannot penetrate into the hut, and, though the top of the reeds is sometimes not plastered and allows a certain amount of ventilation, the air cannot circulate, because the hut has no window. Smoke must make its way through the thatch and it is very difficult indeed to obtain any current of air inside. If a new type of hut were to be adopted, with high walls, good-sized doors and windows, and a roof slightly overhanging the wall, these defects would be remedied. But civilised Natives have not tried to follow this plan. They have at once copied the European system, just

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

as with their clothing! How often we have longed to see them adopt some peculiar costume appropriate to the climate and to their occupations! But when they cast off their belt of tails, it is to put on long trousers, and they all dream of a complete khakhi or serge suit! So they will build square houses, and this certainly has its advantages; the dwelling can be divided into many rooms and the different members of the family can all live under the same roof, which, from an educational point of view, is a good thing.

The *communism of food* is also a splendid feature and calculated to fill the most sanguine socialistic dreamer with joy! But this custom has been severely criticised from a hygienic point of view. The habit of all plunging their fingers into the same plate fosters tuberculosis and other contagious diseases; but I do not think it is for this reason that the custom will die out. In the modern Native settlement many different families live together. They are not united by any ties of blood. Moreover they are sometimes so numerous that such communism would be practically impossible. The golden age has passed for ever!

With it has also passed away the merry lazy life of the half naked *mumumzane*. The coming of civilisation has already deeply changed his mode of living, and the transformation will accentuate itself still further. I have heard Colonists cursing these black people, who believe that they can escape the law of work under which Europeans groan: "these niggers who think that they will be allowed to remain incorrigibly lazy fellows for all time!" I do not share this loudly expressed indignation. First the Native *doda* is by no means an idle man. He has his own occupations for the benefit of the kraal. Secondly, if his wants are few, and if he very soon reaches the happy state of a man who is not obliged to work, I see thousands of Europeans enjoying the life of a "rentier" as much as he does, and without any qualms of conscience. A South African trader who works hard to make his fortune, and hopes to leave the country as quickly as possible, in order to enjoy all the comforts of a European town, theatres, concerts and clubs, has not, after all, a much loftier ideal than the Native he curses... On the other hand, circumstances themselves enforce upon the Native that law of work and teach him that "dignity of labour" of which we so often hear. A civilised Native has increased his wants ten-fold. He requires the wherewithal to satisfy them. This is the only legitimate, the most powerful incentive to work. Fifty, sixty thousand Thongas, the elite of our tribe, are constantly streaming to Johannesburg, where they are considered the best mining boys. Many of them go there to earn

The soil of Spelonken is of a similar nature and very well watered. So the Thongas, who settled in Zoutpansberg, found there a soil which was, in certain respects, more favourable to agriculture than their sandy dunes or their hundjusi on the Coast. 134

Such is Mother Earth for the Thongas. They call it *misaba*, the plural form of nsaba, grains of sand. This word plainly shows that they come from sandy regions. For them the earth is a collection of grains of sand.

II. *Native System of Land Tenure.*

The Native population, taken as a whole, is a very sparse one. Let us consider the Ronga territory, for instance: 100,000 in a territory which may be estimated at 5000 square miles ; this gives a population of only 20 per square mile. The country is, however, very unequally peopled. Natives will only settle in spots where water is found, and, the sand dunes to which I have previously referred being exceedingly dry, they mainly inhabit the slopes of the hills and the immediate neighbourhood of the marshes already described. 162 311 361

To confine myself, amongst the Rongas, to the region in which I have principally travelled, that is to say the neighbourhood of Rikatla, the villages of Nondwane, which extend along a somewhat narrow strip (800 yards wide by 5 miles in length), stretching from the border of Mabota as far as Morakwen, contained in 1880 a population which I should estimate at about 1100 (1). This gives over 350 inhabitants to the square mile. Taking everything therefore into consideration, it may be confidently asserted that the country can easily support its population ; in fact it could support one three or four times as large.

It is important to bear all these circumstances in mind in order to be able properly to appreciate the Ba-Ronga laws relating to landed property. 423

(1) This population has very much diminished since the Ronga Portuguese war in 1894.